



DELAWARE

“This award allowed us to ask what gaps we are not meeting the needs of.”

EXPANDING THE HOURS & REACH OF THE MOBILE BRIDGE TEAM TO FILL CARE GAPS FOR WOMEN

Project Background, Vision, and Outcomes

Delaware was interested in filling in service gaps that existed for individuals with mental health and social support needs exiting correctional settings. Using Transformation Transfer Initiative (TTI) funds, Delaware was able to examine service gaps and then implement services to fill them. The first gap was limited weekend coverage in the jails, meaning that people with mental health needs were not being connected to services upon release. Second, due to safety concerns, women were not released at night without transportation back into their community and this kept women in jail longer than men.

The vision for this project was to expand the hours and reach of the Mobile Bridge program to provide behavioral health screenings, referral to treatment, and enrollment in other state services for women in jail during weekend hours. The expansion also resulted in transportation services, care

coordination, and the use of certified peer specialists to connect with the women. The new transportation component means that woman can now be released at night. Additionally, a staff member follows up with every individual via a phone call, which can give clients an opportunity to talk to someone if they're lonely, depressed, or anxious.

The established outcome of this project was connecting people to behavioral health and other services upon release from a correctional setting. Additionally, the program worked with family members of incarcerated individuals to provide education and health/social supportive resources. A main outcome of this project was the creation of a consumer survey which was designed to capture the “community voice”. Survey responses were then used to inform the delivery of services, such as the need to provide transportation to women leaving jail. One of the items developed using TTI

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funds was the Bridge Clinic Flyer, as seen in Appendix A, to communicate some of the services offered as well as contact information.

Project Implementation: Challenges and Lessons Learned

Challenges to implementing the project were primarily internal, and included staffing changes at the executive and operational level. Turnover in these agency job positions delayed project implementation, however, these positions have since been filled and do not remain as a barrier.

The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic changed the direction of the project in that it was originally designed to be jail-based. The closure of the jails pivoted the program to providing community-based, mobile services to people once they left jail. However, this shift in setting resulted in positive outcomes, such as partnerships with food banks and hosting tables/mobile van tents at community agency fairs, that would not have occurred otherwise. The Covid-19 pandemic also delayed some critical meetings with community providers, partners and stakeholders and supply-chain issues delayed the delivery of program materials (i.e., shirts, stress balls, and other branded handouts).

The main lesson learned was to have a detailed thought process, rather than high-level, when imagining the development and implementation of a project. Additionally, they learned to use peers to inform the development of programs and identify the necessary data that should be collected before project implementation.

Sustainability and Project Legacy

The project was developed to expand the Mobile Bridge's hours and services to better meet the needs of women in jail. Using TTI funds, transportation services were provided to women leaving jail, patient

care coordination was expanded to more community partners, and peer support specialists were able to become certified. The goal when TTI funding ends is to secure additional funding to expand the Mobile Bridge beyond New Castle County.

Health Equity

Improving health equity among women in jail with behavioral health challenges was the purpose of this project, and will continue even when the project ends. Delaware has included health equity initiatives within its strategic organizational planning, including employee selection. Awardees stated that Delaware strives to hire individuals who represent their target population and come from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientation, gender, and those with lived experience. Currently, they are looking to hire more Latinx and multi-lingual peers to work with targeted populations.

Peer Services Utilization

Delaware has a committed stance on the use of peer support specialists to inform and deliver services. Peers are embedded within care teams and play an integral part in strategic planning and programming. Under this TTI award, a certified peer support specialist was part of the Mobile Bridge team and they were able to meet individuals outside of the jail, immediately upon release.

Trauma Informed Care

Prior to receiving TTI award funding, the Governor had made the development of trauma-informed agencies a directive. All agencies are training their staff, leadership, and providers on trauma informed care.

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